

The Planters' Chronicle.

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THE U. P. A. S. I.

(INCORPORATED.)

Contents.

We publish the Proceedings of the Bababudin Planters' Association. We note with approval the advice given by the President as to being provided with Sprayers and Spraying Mixture so as to be ready to attack Green Bug, should it put in an appearance—"To be forewarned is to be forearmed." Apparently as so many different sorts of sprayers are, or will be in use, it would be interesting to compare results of efficiency in working and cost, especially from those who may have two or more sorts at work. It will be noted that the Bababudin Planters' Association, though in accord with the principle of the establishment of a Labour Commission, suggest a sliding scale of subscription. The coming Extraordinary General Meeting should prove interesting, and have a permanent effect on the Planting Community—an effect, we believe, good for all time.

The extraordinary fluctuations of the Rubber market of recent months, has given cause for anxiety and thought to those interested in its cultivation, both as investors and proprietors, but the article we reproduce from *Capital* appears so sensibly reassuring, with its forecast of estimate, and is not too optimistic in tone, that it should be carefully read. The analogy drawn from the coal gamble in Calcutta is very appropriate. The aim of all must be reduction of cost of production, selection of seed to secure the greatest yield of latex, and scientific advice. Southern India with its comparatively cheap labour should come to the front. We recommend a perusal of the tables.

Our correspondence columns contain two letters on the Labour Commission, and it is by such expressions of opinion, that the Labour Committee will be able to present a scheme which will be found acceptable to the Planting Community, or capable of being so amended as to secure the support of the majority—if not of all.

We welcome Mr. Hindley's letter on the use of Explosives in Agriculture, and we have by no means forgotten that he had made an experiment in growing tea and only waited for the proper time to arrive to ask him if he had seen those beneficent results which we fully anticipated.

DISTRICT PLANTERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

Bababudin Planters' Association.

The Second Annual General Meeting of the Association was held at the Siddabille Bungalow, Santaveri, on November 5th, 1913.

PRESENT:—Messrs. A. B. Boyd, (President); T. S. Conner; A. C. W. Denne; S. H. Dennis; F. Hugonin; W. St. C. Johnson; H. Kerr; O. Watson; and N. G. B. Kirwan, (Hon. Secy.)

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

(1.) *President's Address.*—This Meeting should have been held at an earlier date, but Mr. Kirwan tells me he put off calling it, to give men who were at home a chance to attend it. As one of the men who were at home, I thank him for having done so. Having just returned from home, after an absence of six months, I must ask you to forgive me not being able to say much about what your Association has done during the past year, but I feel sure our Honorary Secretary, Mr. Kirwan, will tell us all there is to know.

Two matters of great importance have cropped up lately, viz., the proposed Labour Commission and the rise in coolies' pay. As regards the Labour Commission, if the rest of the planters of S. India agree to have it, I think we certainly ought to join. At present no one seems to know much about what its duties are to be, so we will have to wait till after the Extraordinary General Meeting of the U. P. A. S. I., which I hear is to be called shortly, before we know what's what.

Now is the time to send in any suggestions we may have to make.

Coolies' Pay.—If it is true that Coorg has already given 5 annas and 3 annas, and that North and South Mysore are about to follow suit, there is nothing left for us but to give it also.

Bug.—We ought to be very thankful that so far there has been no outbreak of Green Bug in our District. Report says that the Bug is well known in several places in the Low Country. So it is the duty of every planter to be prepared for it, and to lay in a supply of Sprayers and Spraying mixture at once, if not already done so. Most of our pests have come up from the Low Country, so it is from there that we have chiefly to guard against it.

I hope that Government will very soon bring in a stringent Pest Act.

Roads.—Our agitation of the Road question has received attention from the Government, and resulted in a very liberal allowance for the Santaveri-Chickmagalur Road. Certain Members of the Association have undertaken the work to assist the Public Works Department, but it is much to be regretted that the work is so very much behindhand, and I hope that this will soon be rectified.

We are glad to have Mr. Poppanna as Executive Engineer. He has already shown great energy in getting round the District in the Monsoon.

Santaveri Sunday Dispensary.—The correspondence on this question resulted in an Ayurvedic Dispensary being authorised from July, 1913, for a trial. But up to date nothing has been seen of the Dispensary.

Railway Rate.—The reduction on Manure Freights from Dharwar was asked for and granted by the M. and S. M. Railway.

Bababudin Hill Road Toll Gate.—The Committee appointed for this matter in conjunction with the North Mysore Native Planters' Association has put forward a scheme for the up-keep of this road, at a much reduced figure, and it is hoped that Government will agree to their proposals and not impose a Toll Gate. H. H. the Maharajah visited the District last hot weather. His visit was greatly appreciated by both Europeans and Natives, and I hope it will not be long before we see him in our midst again.

As to-day's agenda is a very long one, I think I have wasted more than enough of your time.

But, before sitting down I should like to thank our Honorary Secretary, Mr. Kirwan, for all he has done for us. No one could have done more, and very few as much, so I think we all owe him a very hearty vote of thanks.

(2.) *Honorary Secretary's Report. Accounts.*—The accounts for the past year are laid before you.

The balance to the credit of the Association at the close of the year is Rs. 1,461-11-11. Of this sum sum 150 is held on behalf of the Sanderson Ward Store Building Fund, and 780 is due to the Scientific Assistant Fund to complete the 2nd years' subscription, leaving a working balance of Rs. 531-11-11.

The acreage for the past year was 5,721 acres, an increase of 332. One Estate which promised to join us, failed to do so and thus entailed our paying a slightly larger subscription to the U. P. A. than we should have done. We had guaranteed our subscription on 6,000 acres, against the 5,721 that actually paid.

Subscriptions for the current year have been paid by all estates except three. Also subscriptions to the S. I. P. B. F.

Budget.—Subscriptions for the Current year will amount to Rs. 2,870 8-0 which added to the balance of Rs 531-11-11 gives a total of Rs. 3,402-3-11.

EXPENDITURE.

	Rs.	A.	P.
Subscription to the U. P. A. at 2 as. per acre	...	715	2 0
Postages, etc.	...	15	0 0
C. of P. A. Postages	...	10	0 0
Address to the Viceroy	...	75	0 0
3rd year subscription to the Assistant Sc. O.	...	1,800	0 0
Total...	2,615	2	0

leaving a balance of Rs 787-1-11.

While thanking all members for their assistance during the past year, I have much pleasure in tendering my resignation.

Mr. Johnson was asked to audit the accounts for the past year.

(3.) *Minutes of the Council Meeting.*—The minutes of the last meeting of the Council were read. Attention was drawn to the new arrange-

ments made with Mr. Fantini, viz., that he should look to the members of the Council in each District to help him in securing plots for experiments, and to safeguard their continuity. Also, that experimenters will be expected to bear the costs of their experiments, and make their own arrangements for getting up materials.

The Scientific Assistant's programme for the coming year was discussed. It was pointed out by the Honorary Secretary that much adverse criticism of the Scientific Assistant's work is heard, but that the work he is now engaged upon is not such as immediate results can be shown. Members were asked to suggest some other line of work, if they were not satisfied with things as they are at present.

After a general discussion members expressed their approval of the present programme.

(4.) *Introduction of Tea into Mysore.*—Read letter from Mr. C. Srinivasa Rao on this subject. It was also pointed out that the Economic Conference had sanctioned an expenditure of Rs. 500 for the purchase of Tea Seed.

(5.) *Green Bug and Sprayers.*—The Sprayer sent on approval by Messrs. Smith, Stanistreet and Co. of Calcutta was tried, and 10 were ordered by members present. It was further mentioned that the Mysore Planters' Supply Company had been put into communication with the above Firm, as Messrs. Smith, Stanistreet and Co. suggested stocks being carried locally.

Report No. 3. of the Scientific Assistant contains all directions for making the spraying mixture.

The Honorary Secretary was asked to obtain information as to the cost of spraying per acre.

(6.) *Proposed Mysore Labour Law.*—Mr. Dennis reported the result of the interview with the Dewan on this subject.

(7.) *Labour Rates.*—After some discussion on the rise in rates, necessitated by the action of Coorg in raising their rates, the following resolutions were passed.

Proposed by Mr. Kirwan, and seconded by Mr. Boyd.

That we keep to our present rates as long as we can, but, if others raise their rates, we fall into line. Carried.

Proposed by Mr. Hugonin and seconded by Mr. Denne.

That members agree not to raise rates until the matter has been further discussed at a meeting of the Association. Carried.

(8.) *Bababudin Hill Road Toll-Gate.*—Mr. Hugonin reported what the Committee had done in the matter.

(9.) *Viceroy's Visit to Mysore.*—The payment of the Association's share of the Address and Casket was sanctioned.

(10.) *Removal of Timber from Coffee Estates.*—Read Government order No. R. 2046-54/ft. 25-12-2 of September 1st 1913, to the effect that,

If the Forest Department does not affix its seal to timber for which a license has been granted within six months, the timber may be moved without further delay.

(11.) *Delegates' Report, U. P. A. S. I.*—The Delegates' Report was read by Mr. Dennis.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

Before reading our report I should like to say, I am sorry my co-Delegate, Mr. Lovett, is also not present to-day, illness being the cause of his absence.

What I have to say is very brief, and is merely a resumé of matters which took place at the Conference in August and are of particular interest to us.

Your Delegates were not instructed to bring up any special subject, but we hoped the vexed question of Labour would be solved.

Labour.—A proposal was brought forward by the Hon'ble Mr. Barber, one of the Labour Committee appointed last year, that we should have a Labour Commission. This proposition was unanimously supported, and a Committee was appointed, on which our Honorary Secretary (Mr. Kirwan) served, to draw up a scheme. You have all, doubtless, received the printed report of the Committee.

Pest Act.—A Resolution was passed asking Government to introduce a Pest Act, and I see the Imperial Council at Simla have an "Insect Pests Bill" before them at present. A Deputation from the combined Associations of Mysore waited on the Dewan of Mysore, at which we brought forward this subject together with others, and he was sympathetic. Dr. Coleman, Director of Agriculture to the Government of Mysore, is also going to take drastic measures against Green Bug in the abandoned and neglected native Estates in the infected area, which will be one of its greatest nurseries.

Sprayers.—I need not say anything on this subject, as you are already in possession of our Hon. Secretary's report.

Scientific Officer.—We agreed to continue your subscription to this fund for another period of 5 years, and so did all other Associations, with the exception of one. It was generally admitted that Mr. Anstead's services to the Planting Community were most valuable.

We supported the suggestion of a Mycologist being added to the Scientific Staff, as so many of the diseases of Coffee, Tea, and Rubber are of a fungoid description.

European Defence Association and School of Tropical Medicine were also on the Agenda, and it was resolved that both were worthy of support by members.

Hybridization.—The progress made at the Nilgiri experimental plot was good, we were told, but no great advancement could be made until the plants flower and produce seed.

Planters' Benevolent Fund.—The report of this fund from 1909 to December 31st, 1912 was given to Delegates—it was in a flourishing condition, having a substantial sum invested.

Arakkere-Mangalore Railway.—The construction of this line, we were given to understand, was now probable, as it only awaited the sanction of the Railway Board.

Agricultural Board's Visit.—We were informed at the meeting that the Imperial Board of Agriculture will visit the Madras Presidency this cold weather, and some members of the U. P. A. S. I. hope to have the pleasure of showing them some Estates in the vicinity of Coimbatore.

A vote of thanks to Messrs. Dennis and Lovett for their representing the Association in Bangalore was carried.

(12). *Proposed Labour Commission.*—Mr. Kirwan shortly explained the duties of the proposed Commission, as far as he had been able to ascertain it in Bangalore.

A general discussion on the subject followed, and the views of the meeting were incorporated in the following resolution:

"Proposed by Mr. Boyd and seconded by Mr. Johnson:

"That this Association is entirely in accord with the formation of a Labour Commission, with a view to future co-operation in Labour matters in Southern India.

"As coffee cultivation only requires about $\frac{1}{2}$ a cooly per acre, as against $1\frac{1}{2}$ —2 employed by Tea & Rubber, Coffee interests should be permitted to join the Commission at 8 as. per acre after paying the initial subscription up to Rs.2 per acre."

Voting—6 for, *nil* against, 3 members did not vote.

1,710 acres were enrolled for the Labour Commission. Messrs. Boyd and Kirwan were elected to represent the Association at the U. P. A. special meeting."

13. Election of Office Bearers. —

	President,	Vice-President,	Secretary.
Denne	1	4	0
Boyd	8	0	0
Hugonin	0	1	0.
Johnson	0	3	0
Dennis	0	1	1
Kirwan	0	0	8

Result.—Mr. Boyd, President, Mr. Denne, Vice-President, Mr. Kirwan, Honorary Secretary.

(14.) *Election of Members of the C. of P. A's.*—Last year's members were re-elected, viz. Messrs. Hugonin, Dennis and Kirwan. With a vote of thanks to Mr. Boyd for his hospitality throughout the year the meeting closed.

(Signed) A. B. BOYD,

Chairman.

(") N. G. B. KIRWAN,

Honorary Secretary.

RUBBER.**Rubber Investments.**

Much outcry has of late been heard regarding the so-called slump in plantation rubber and the amounts which have been lost by share-holders in Mid-Eastern companies. Home papers have devoted heavy lead to the scare headline "What's wrong with rubber!" and many have proved themselves amenable to the influence of *ursine operators* in publishing exaggerated extravaganzas on the subject, having little or no foundation in fact. Some of the latter have found their way into the Indian Press via the *scissors and paste* route, and so it may not be out of place to devote a little attention to the actual state of affairs from an investment standpoint at the present time.

Human nature is the same all the world over and, in the minor cataclysms of financial life, history has a remarkable way of repeating itself. Wiseacres, after the event, can tell us that the top of the coal boom in 1907, when people were falling over each other in the get rich-quick struggle to purchase shares, was the time when the few judicious operators were busily unloading their scrip on an all too gullible public. The inevitable happened, and the prices of good shares under the lash of mere temporary adversity fell too far below their intrinsic merits. Then was the time to buy, and those who realized their opportunity have benefited handsomely now that the industry has returned to normal conditions. If speculative operators and investors would realize the truth of the homilies: "Buy when every one else wants to sell, and sell when all others desire to buy" coupled with "Never expect to get in at the bottom or out at the top," we should have less sore heads and empty purses in Calcutta (not to say Bombay!) to-day. Yet, despite the foregoing example of our last great boom, precisely the identical thing has happened again in rubber, and will doubtless occur again in heaven knows what to-morrow. An acre of rubber costs on the average, not more than say £30 to bring into bearing. Allowing £20 as a generous provision for interest during unproductive development years, we may take the inclusive figure at £70, and for this article, which the world can produce in literally any quantity required, the public were greedily purchasing up to even as high a figure as £1,000, being the market capitalization per acre of some of the leading stocks at the height of the boom. It is easy to be wise after the event, but really it does seem a waste of sympathy to throw compassion to such unthinking and unreasonable duffers in financial spoliation.

The price of rubber has now come down to a reasonable level relative to cost of production and is still, and will as far as can be foreseen, continue, in a position to pay quite a handsome return on the money invested in reasonably capitalized estates, provided the same are favourably situated and properly managed. Putting development expenses, including interest on capital during the unproductive period, at £70, cost of production at 1s. per lb., sale price at 2s. a pound and a yield of 300 lbs. only per acre, a return of £15 a year profit on a capital outlay of £70 may be looked for, which is by no means an unhandsome result. One of two of the foregoing points, however, cannot be passed over without comment. "Can plantation rubber be produced at 1s. per lb. all in?" and "Will the price remain as high as 2s. per lb?" These two questions sum up the whole of the rubber question of to-day. Rubber can be produced at an inclusive cost of 1s. a pound, for the very simple reason that it is being produced at that rate to-day. Very few estates have got their expenses down to this low figure admittedly, but that some have done so proves that it is to be done, and what is more, will have to be done by those concerns which mean to be first rankers and produce the best results

for their proprietors. When estates first come into bearing expenses of production must necessarily be high, but these should gradually be reduced until the ultimate goal of shilling rubber is reached. It is not every estate that is going to get anywhere near this figure, however; some of them will never get much below the two shilling mark, unless they go about it in a very different way to the methods of to-day. This question of production costs, present and prospective, should be the most important point in the selection of rubber investments at the present time. Availability and cost of labour, transport facilities, healthiness or otherwise of estate, taxation, rent, rate of tree growth, competency and cost of management, agency charges and many minor points of expenditure have all to be taken into consideration in dealing with the matter, and will repay the study of the cautious investor, before he purchases shares at even to-day's depreciated quotations. These are matters which each investor must look into himself, and the only point of general interest, which it may perhaps be well to add, is a note of self-congratulation that our Southern India and Lower Burma plantations give promise of being quite in the first rank as cheap producers, and of being likely to hold their own, whatever fate may hold in store for concerns situated in countries where your rubber will cost you more.

The second and equally crucial matter which demands attention from those interested in rubber at the present time is the question of the probable future price of the product, which has recently experienced such a severe fall in selling value. A well-known firm of rubber share brokers in London have just compiled the following estimate of the world's actual and estimated future production of rubber:—

I.—Actual.						
WORLD'S PRODUCTION IN TONS.						
	Plantation,	Brazil,	Rest.	Total.	Consumption	
					Tons.	
1905	...	143	34,000	26,800	61,000	61,000
1906	...	510	36,000	29,500	66,000	66,000
1907	...	1,000	38,000	30,000	69,000	69,000
1908	...	1,800	39,000	24,200	65,000	65,000
1909	...	3,600	42,000	23,400	69,000	68,500
1910	...	8,200	40,500	21,300	70,000	66,000
1911	...	14,100	39,500	22,400	76,000	73,000
1912	...	28,500	40,500	30,000	99,000	98,000
1913	...	42,000	41,000	32,000	115,000	112,000
II.—Estimated.						
1914	...	64,000	40,000	20,000	124,000	126,000
1915	...	94,000	38,000	10,000	142,000	142,000
1916	...	121,000	35,000	5,000	161,000	159,000
1917	...	147,000	32,000	2,500	181,500	179,000
1918	...	166,000	30,000	nil	196,000	197,000
1919	...	183,000	30,000	nil	213,000	216,700
1920	...	198,000	30,000	nil	228,000	238,370
1921	...	209,000	30,000	nil	239,000	262,200

The figures given up to 1912 are actuals, and those for 1913 will necessarily be very near the mark. From and after 1914 the details are based on expected yields per acre. They go on to say:—

"One of the most striking results of the slump in rubber prices has been the effect upon the market for inferior grades of wild rubber (Congos, etc.), which have already become unsaleable, except at a severe loss. All competent observers agree that these grades are likely to drop out with

startling suddenness, but to be on the safe side we have allowed for diminution of only 12,000 tons during 1914, and have assumed that for a year or two afterwards substantial, though diminishing, quantities of inferior wild rubber will still somehow be brought to market. Another direction in which we have deliberately over-estimated supplies is in the figures for Brazil. It must not be forgotten that of the 40,000 tons at present coming from Brazil, considerably less than one half is fine hard Para. The remainder consists of inferior grades which are likely to go the way of Congos, etc., but in our estimate we have allowed for only a gradual shrinkage, and have left Brazil appearing as a producer of 30,000 tons per annum even after 1917.

Turning to the great question of future consumption, it will be seen from our table of actual results that for the past nine years there has been an average annual increase of about 10 per cent. The figures for 1911, 1912 and 1913 show an average increase of 19½ per cent. per annum. We have assumed an annual progressive increase of 12½ per cent. for the four years 1914-1917, but have then dropped the rate of increase to 10 per cent. This is probably a substantial under-estimate when the allowance is made for the stimulating effect of low prices on demand and for the rapid expansion of the motor industry. The fall in American demand, traceable largely to special causes, is merely a passing phase.

Summing up the situation, it is pretty clear, from the statistics, that no real over-production exists at the present time, nor is there any reason to expect it in the near future. If the price of plantation rubber remains for a time in the neighbourhood of 2s., the world's output, which we have estimated for 1914 (124,000 tons), is likely to be so sharply reduced through the further falling off of inferior wild grades and the natural restriction of plantation supplies from those estates which cannot produce profitably under the conditions named, that an actual shortage may easily be experienced before the end of the twelve months. If, on the other hand, the price shows a moderate recovery, our estimates for 1914 and the next year or two are likely to be very near the mark, and (as will be seen by referring to the figures) this will mean that the margin between supply and demand may sway a little one way or the other, but up to 1919 there would be a position which would secure thoroughly profitable working for the plantation industry. This is on the assumption that Brazil will still be supplying 30,000 tons per annum. From 1919 onwards a heavy and increasing shortage is indicated even if Brazil is still good for the same quantity. Any important reduction from the quarter would bring about a shortage at an earlier date. Of course, conditions may be expected to adjust themselves as the years go on, and the working of economic laws will lead to increased supplies, if required, by the extension of planting, etc. We do not suggest that in 1921, 23,000 tons more rubber can be consumed than produced. But we do suggest that by that date a very much larger amount of rubber will have to be forthcoming from somewhere than could be supplied by all the plantations which are just now striking such fear into the heart of the pessimist, plus 30,000 tons from Brazil."

The foregoing appears to be quite a logical rendering of the future prospects of the industry and should go far to reassure both existing investors in reasonably capitalized concerns, and those who take advantage of the present slump in prices to acquire an interest in rubber, that they are participating in an industry which is not likely to become less remunerative than at present, except perhaps quite temporarily at any time, and which affords an excellent opportunity for the profitable investment of capital.—
Capitalist.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Fundalur P. O., Nilgiris.

13th November, 1913.

The Labour Commission.

THE EDITOR,

Planters' Chronicle,

Bangalore.

Sir.—It is practically admitted that there are not two opinions as to the desirability of some scheme such as was outlined by the Committee appointed at the last meeting of the U. P. A. S. I. to deal with this matter, and the principal objection to it, underlying all others, is the one of cost. As matters stand we have to put down Rs. 2 per acre or stand out. This is a high premium for a very partial insurance, and I think it a pity that the Committee was asked to go into the method of raising the money at all, during the limited time that must have been available for drawing up a scheme of the kind. Had a draft estimate of the probable cost been made, and the method of raising the necessary amount left for consideration and discussion by District Associations, the scheme would then still have been in the "melting pot," and whether the money was to be raised by an acreage assessment, a poll tax, or a percentage on advances, or in any other way could have been decided there, and men with small advances, or local labour would have had an opportunity of placing their views before these various meetings from their own particular standpoint.

Whether 2,000 acres at Re. 1 per acre, or 1,000 acres at Rs. 2 per acre joins cannot matter much to the Commission, but it is a point of vital importance to the Company or individual who has to pay, especially if the interest involved represents a large acreage of non-productive land, or land that has not yet reached the profit earning stage, and I venture to think that had less per acre been budgetted for, the total realised would have been greater. Admitting that it was eventually found that the best way to raise the money was by an acreage assessment, was it not too early in the day to fix the rate, even tentatively, at Rs. 2 per acre? Had this point been left over it would then have been open for Planters to say that they proposed to come in provided that so many acres joined the scheme. For instance, any one prepared to back it to the extent of Re 1 per acre on his holding would agree to join provided that 1,50,000 acres as a minimum did so—it being accepted that the scheme as it stands will cost Rs. 1,50,000 per annum. Those who accept the scheme as it stands will place their minimum low, and others will come forward on the basis that they are prepared to subscribe at; and the probabilities are that owing to much greater support being forthcoming than is now the case it will be found that the great majority of these latter have not placed their minimum figure too high, and this alteration will not mean consigning the project to the melting pot again.

* That the Commission properly worked will do a great deal to help us there can be no reasonable doubt, and to my mind one of the greatest benefits (and one not specially referred to by the Committee) will be that it will give us an organisation through which we can meet competitors in our labour market, and bargain with them so as to obtain our own share of what we both want. That any Commission will ever stop the adventurous spirit, or

the one who wishes to leave this country for his country's good, from going elsewhere is unlikely, and so long as rates of pay vary from one district to another, or from one country to another (which will be always!) he will continue to go, but it may be that even now the coolie is beginning to realise that the higher pay ruling in some places, means corresponding disadvantages in other respects.

The idea is expressed that the Commission will not in future years cost so much as is now budgetted for, but I cannot see this, and think that before the problem is finally solved much more will have to be spent, or incidental expenses very much reduced, and no doubt the Committee which dealt with the matter went into these latter very fully, and may possibly have had facts and figures to guide them. If so, then there is little to be hoped for in that direction, and with only 3 Assistant Commissioners provided I would ask "what are these amongst so many?"

Yours faithfully,

J. AIRD.

Kinnacoorie Estate.

Kilkundah P. O., Nilgiris.

II

THE EDITOR,

The Planters' Chronicle,

Bangalore.

Dear Sir,—I fancy that most planters are in favour of some attempt being made to organise and supply labour which, from my point of view, the present Labour Commission does not propose to do. To make a start why not have a Limited Liability Co. for the benefit of shareholders only. There ought to be enough men, who would require its help or who are in favour of it, to take up the share necessary to finance the business. To begin with, I should say the following would be sufficient to attempt at first and should not be so expensive as the estimate now proposed by the Labour Commission.

(1) Have an agent in each recruiting centre to recruit, to make inquiries as to the status of maistries already employed (when required to do so), to ascertain the whereabouts of absconders, etc., Labour supplied to be charged for per head to those supplied and distributed as the Ceylon Labour Commission do theirs.

(2) Have all maistries registered by finger prints, which can be taken by employers or an agent. This would prevent

(a) the same man being registered twice over

(b) the crimping of maistries (though not of labour) presuming members agreed not to employ an unregistered maistry.

Yours faithfully,

O. W. MARDEN.

Seaforth, Nilgiris.

12th November, 1913.

Use of Explosives in Agriculture.

The EDITOR,

The Planters' Chronicle.

Bangalore.

Sir,—I was very glad to see Mr. Trelearn's letter on explosives, as it bears out what I have previously written you on the subject, but his letter further confirms one or two things which every one seems to doubt, viz., that dynamiting has been done out there for some years and with any marked results, that though it may primarily appear expensive the results are permanent; and it will bring back country which may be absolutely going out! manure sick, sour, exhausted. I do not think his remarks apply to *wet ground*; in this country soils are fairly free, whereas the country he writes of is very puggy naturally with a shallow surface soil in parts; to get the full benefit of shots I think this soil should be fairly damp, now would be just about ideal I think.

Since I have been here I have been too busy to do any real work but on a small patch of three year old tea I dynamited in May, I can now see a decided difference, but it is during, and at the end of the hot weather I hope to note more marked results.

I am just taking up the management of 1,000 acres of tea and there I intend making some careful experiments, on some of the very old tea chiefly.

You will notice Mr. T. mentions Rackarock which you see he says is far stronger than Gelignite.

The explosive people out here have apparently never heard of it.

It was, as far as I remember, slightly cheaper than Gelignite.

Yours truly,

COLIN HINDLEY.

Chundrapore Estate.

Mudigere P. O.,

Kadur District, Mysore State,

8th November, 1913.

Weed Killer.

THE EDITOR,

The Planters' Chronicle.

Bangalore.

Dear Sir.—Can the Scientific Department or any experimenter tell us any more about Arsenite of Soda as a weed killer?

Yours faithfully,

JNO. G. HAMILTON.